

Life After It by eyesonstars_feetonground

Series: [Life After It \[1\]](#)

Category: IT (Movies - Muschietti), IT - Stephen King

Genre: Alternate Universe - Everyone Lives/Nobody Dies, Canon-Typical Violence, Everybody Lives, F/M, Fix-It, Future Fic, M/M, Vignette

Language: English

Characters: Audra Phillips, Ben Hanscom, Beverly Marsh, Bill Denbrough, Eddie Kaspbrak, Mike Hanlon, Minor Characters, Patricia Blum Uris, Richie Tozier, Stanley Uris

Relationships: Ben Hanscom/Beverly Marsh, Eddie Kaspbrak/Richie Tozier, Minor or Background Relationship(s)

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2019-11-28

Updated: 2019-11-28

Packaged: 2019-12-19 03:01:52

Rating: Not Rated

Warnings: Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings

Chapters: 1

Words: 4,107

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

Vignettes of the Losers' lives after defeating It (and living)

Life After It

Bev is covered in blood and sewage and pure, evil filth, soaked through with her own tears. The ceiling is coming down on them, covering her in even more dust and dirt, drowning her in it. She is still sobbing incoherently in a way she's never done before, no matter what she's faced.

And all she can think, ridiculously is that she's never seen Richie cry. Not like this. She had seen him tear up in the past; but for all his jabbering, he had always been intensely private about his emotions. It's easy to see that in retrospect. All that constant talking, annoying them on purpose so they would give up getting to know his feelings, his hurts. Talking and talking and talking until everything real got lost in a constant stream of meaningless words. The opposite of Bill, really, who was forced to choose each word with careful deliberation.

There had been nights, during that summer, when it would be just her and Richie. Children lying together under Derry's starry skies. A cigarette passed back and forth in the silence. And she had felt she knew him better in that intimate silence than in all the times they talked. Some part of her always knew what he never said out loud. He had never looked at her the way the rest of them had, not even once. Bev has always been aware of the way men look at her; and out of all of them, Richie's eyes had never landed on her with that interest. His gaze had always been for someone else.

And all she can think now is how sweet that silence would be, instead of the entire world falling around her, punctuated by Richie's animalistic cries. He has never cried like this, desperate and guttural, his hands scrabbling about in Eddie's blood. The godawful sounds he is making are ripping through his throat, almost wounding him, as he keens and begs; begs them and Eddie and God.

Bev sees Ben, her beloved, sweet Ben, grappling for Richie, trying to haul him away. Richie fights back viciously, desperate to get back to Eddie. He ignores Bev when she puts her own trembling hand on his shoulder, when she tells him Eddie is gone. And he is gone, there's no question about it. She can see how he has gone cold and clammy in death, the blood oozing out of his chest would without a sign of life.

We have to go, someone yells. *We have to go or we'll all die*. But Richie won't move away, and he looks up at her.

God, she can't help but think about how much she loves him. Loves those dark eyes, big and mirthful behind coke-bottle glasses, now blood-shot and streaming tears. And he is that same 13-year-old again when he looks up at her and asks her, very quietly,

"he's not gone, is he Bevvie? He's not gone."

And he's begging her like she is his mother, like she can soothe all his hurts and make it better. She knows he's starting to lose energy, starting to become exhausted under the weight of such helplessness and grief. She knows if she says Eddie is dead one more time, they'll be able to drag Richie away.

Bev looks back over at Eddie. She loves him so much too, this snappy firecracker of a man, always so energetic and *alive*, no matter how much he squelched it down under paranoia and hypochondria. She thinks about how unfair it all is. *It's not fair it's not fair it's not fair* they've all lost so much time and so much of themselves because of It. They lost each other for so many years. Fuck It, she thinks. Fuck It for making her watch her only family suffer like this, for making her watch the love of her life tear her best friend away from the love of his life. And she knows what Eddie is to Richie. If she pulls Richie away, now, he won't recover. He'll never forgive them and he'll never heal from this; and it'll be three of the Losers lost forever.

This will kill monsters. If you believe it does.

Bev looks back at the rest of them, tears in her eyes. She can do this, she has always tied them all together. The only girl, constantly wrangling her stupid boys together. She looks at them with fire in her eyes, and she looks down at Richie and she shouts.

"He's alive. He's alive, Richie. I believe it, I believe he's alive."

And Richie is clutching onto Eddie, curling into his corpse; and Bill is looking at her enraged and incredulous; and Ben is looking so desperately sad and confused. But it is Mike, Mike who has spent his entire life immersed in magic and evil and Derry, who understands

first. His face hardens with desperation, and he clamps his hand onto Richie's shoulder. But instead of pulling him away, he yells, yells with all his heart.

"He's alive he's alive he's alive. I believe he's alive. Richie he's still alive."

And Bill and Ben take longer to understand, but neither of them leaves. They won't leave, no matter how much rubble falls on them. Because they love each other more than they love anyone else outside of these sewers. Because which one of them wouldn't die, happily and willingly, down here for even the slightest chance to bring Eddie back. Eddie already has.

And they all have their hands on either Richie or Eddie, all of them crouched together into one small space, one small space still safe away from all the rubble and the influence of the clown. And they close their eyes and they believe. They believe Eddie is alive with all their hearts, remember those gentle eyes and those summer days, fanny packs and medicine, the lingering smell of antiseptic and the biting words.

No one who dies here ever really dies.

And despite her conviction, her refusal to accept this ending, it's still not working. Bev can feel the panic rising up in her throat until she sees Richie press his forehead into Eddie's. He goes as calm as he possibly can, though his breath is still hitching, and he breathes.

She thinks, for a desperate second, that Richie will kiss him; the same way Ben had once kissed her, with his sweet belief in fairytale love. She had seen Eddie on top of Richie, looking so triumphant after throwing that spear, and had felt sure he would plant a kiss on Richie right then and there; it had been a brief thought of hope and light before It's claw had shot out and destroyed a part of all of their souls. Bev thinks Richie will kiss him because she remembers those heavy summer evenings with the two of them glued together in the hammock, popsicles dripping between them, sticky and sweaty.

Richie doesn't kiss Eddie, doesn't kiss that cold, dead mouth, trickling blood. What he does is more intimate, more unbearable; it flays Bev

where she is, mere inches away from the two of them. He presses his face into Eddie's, and whispers; whispers over and over and over again, for what could be seconds or minutes or hours or days. He speaks; it's always been what he's done best.

I love you I love you I love you I love you I love you I love you I love you I love you I love you

He presses his confession, his sacrifice, his secret, into Eddie's cold skin, into his chapped mouth, into the single breath separating them. And in a brief second of silence, Bev feels Eddie's body, thinks it is a little bit warmer than it was before. She sees the briefest exhalation of breath brush out onto Richie's lips, sees the slightest twitch under near transparent eyelids. But what proves it is the blood that starts pouring out of his body once again, rich and red with life. Bev despairs at how anyone can lose so much blood, but for the first time it is a relief. She would drown in Eddie's blood to bring him back to life. Remembers him on his hands and knees, scrubbing it out of her bathroom.

Richie finally moves back, shuddering. Ben and Mike grab Eddie and Bill pulls up the rear as Bev leads them out of the sewers, as they fall out of the building seconds before the entire structure collapses behind them.

They all know what just happened was a miracle, that they had brought Eddie back from death. They wonder if it was It or Derry or the Turtle God or some other ancient ritual; but in the end, it is just them. The magic is all their own.

Bev's gaze goes to Ben, that sweet face and those gentle eyes. He is packing his jacket into Eddie's wound, pressing down with all of his considerable strength. Richie is kneeling over Eddie, unsure where to put his hands; he is still sobbing, his breathing becoming alarmingly irregular. Bev grabs his hand and rubs his back, trying to get him to match her breathing. Trying to give him hope.

Bill is on his phone calling for an ambulance, and Mike is rushing to the nearest house for help. And all Bev can do is stare at the ruins of Neibolt, at the sun dappling the ruins of her greatest nightmare. She hears the sirens coming for them, and feels sweet relief.

It'll be alright now.

...

They sit in the hospital waiting room together, ignoring the grime and sweat and blood still caked all over them. Bev is sandwiched between Ben and Richie. Richie is silent and still, so unlike himself; tears are silently dripping out from underneath his glasses, across the slope of his nose. Tears dripping onto the floor, as if his very lifeblood is draining out of him every second they don't hear about Eddie's status.

The doctor has told them the next twelve hours are crucial. That if Eddie makes it through the night, the chance of him making it through the rest of his recovery will be exponentially higher. He tells them that Eddie flatlined twice during surgery.

Three times dead. The holy number.

Twelve hours Eddie might not live through, and she could laugh because they already brought him back from the fucking dead. What are twelve hours in the face of the impossible; and they had done the impossible, because she had felt no pulse in Eddie's wrist, had felt no life in his cold, still form.

Bev knows Richie's life depends on these twelve hours. If anything happens to Eddie, Richie's life will be over. And no matter what happens, these twelve hours will haunt him for the rest of his life.

They all sit, still and nauseous from the adrenalin crash. It's getting itchy and disgusting; people are staring at them. Bill, Big Bill, who has always been their leader and will always be Bev's first love, drags them out of the building. They even push Richie out of his seat and jostle him toward the exit; Bev knows he would protest, but even he's too weak from the ordeal of the last few days. They follow Bill, as they always will, and he leads them to a familiar sight. Bev laughs for the first time in what seems like years, and begins stripping her clothes. Just like before, she is the first one in the water.

...

Twelve hours later, they learn that Eddie is still alive.

They take shifts to stay with him throughout the rest of the week and pretend not to notice that Richie is always there.

He refuses to leave the hospital after that initial trip to the quarry. So Bev is the one who takes him into an empty hospital bathroom after she has already gone back to her hotel room to eat and shower.

She wipes him down with wet paper towels the best she can, wipes the blood and quarry grime away from his glasses, runs a plastic comb through his hair. She brings him a fresh set of clothes and helps him change when he starts shaking too hard to do it himself. And then she holds him as he breaks down in relief, painful sobs wracking against her own stomach as she rocks him.

By the end of the week (and she has hardly noticed that it has been two weeks since she left her life behind), Eddie is staying awake for hours at a time. Richie curls around him on the hospital bed, their fingers lightly tangled together. Bev smiles a watery smile, and some money exchanges hands in jest. They have all always known.

It is on that last night that Bev is in her room. Ben has joined her as has been their silent arrangement for the entire week. She curls onto her side in a tank top and sleep shorts, feeling properly clean after a week of washing and scrubbing. Ben tucks himself into her back, making himself as small as possible as has always been his habit, as if it will make people overlook him. It hurts Bev's heart. She treasures the broad hand he lays on her stomach, and its warmth lulls her into sleep.

Sometimes, when she's feeling especially vulnerable, itching for a cigarette, she'll hear a voice that sounds distressingly like Pennywise, whispering in her ear.

He's so big and strong Bev. You clearly have a type. How long will it take until he uses that strength against you Beverly? Are you still daddy's good little girl?

But then Ben will smile at her, and she'll notice how endearingly shy his smile still is, after all these years. He'll look at her like he can't

believe it only took 27 years for them to be together, like he would have waited forever, like he's the luckiest man in the entire world. He'll trace the fresh bruises on her arms or her shoulders or her breasts, wounds she can't blame on the clown; and his face will collapse in grief, but never a touch of anger. He'll lay there and hold her hand as if it is precious, and he'll tell her about his own struggles with alcoholism and drug use, because even after years of success, he's always felt so goddamn empty. She thinks of two packs of cigarettes a day since she was eleven years old.

And the Voice disappears, misting away like a summer breeze.

That night, she has one of her dreams, reminiscent of years of psychic torture after looking into the deadlights. She sees Stan, lying in a hospital bed of his own, instead of bleeding out in the tub. His wrists are bandaged, and a soft, blonde woman sits next to him, tears streaming down her face. Bev watches and watches, and then Stan's eyes snap open and he takes a heaving breath. The woman screams.

Bev wakes up, a cry on her lips.

...

"You have to go. You have to check if he's alive."

Eddie insists on it. They are torn, but he practically pushes them out the door. They need to know if what she saw was just a hopeful dream, born of grief; or if there is even the smallest chance of it being true.

Bev is in awe of Eddie's bravery; the courage Richie has always recognized. Even with a massive hole in his chest and his cheek, with pins holding his arm together after it had smashed against the rock, he is so desperately brave.

His brow wrinkles with his obstinacy. Bev feels so overwhelmingly fond.

"Go. Go – Richie and I will catch up to you."

Because Richie will not leave him, no matter how much he loves Stan. Bev is glad Eddie is aware of that fact.

So the four of them, her and Ben and Bill and Mike, pile into Mike's truck with all their luggage thrown haphazardly in the back. And they drive all the way to Stan's house, Mike driving recklessly out of Derry, breaking a multitude of laws in his desperation to get them out. When they reach the edge of the town, they can feel something pulling them back. Something that has entrenched itself in the very foundation of the town, the remnants of an ancient evil reluctant to let them leave, stretching out and grasping at them as they drive. But they keep going, and once they get out, it pops back and releases them, and they finally exhale in the silence of the open road. Mike reaches out a shaky hand to start the radio, and a list of '80s hits blares out from the speakers. And they all laugh so hard they could cry.

...

They burst into Stan's hospital room like lunatics after a full day's drive, and he is alive, gloriously alive. Frail and pale and bedbound, but alive. He looks up at them with a question in his eye, his lip trembling.

"It's done, Stan," Bill whispers. Stan has always been his best friend, and Big Bill has always been their leader. He knows what to say. "Pennywise is gone." Stan crumples in relief, and Bev watches Bill, standing strong despite his own emotional turmoil. She had loved him once, loved him with the desperation of a child. And now she remembers why.

Stan exhales shakily and tears leak out of the corners of his eyes.

Later, they will all berate him for daring to do what he did, for ripping their little family apart, for destroying their hearts. They will scold him for thinking he wasn't braver than all of them combined, for being so stupid.

But for now, they all crowd around him, gently holding hands like they had as children one sunny afternoon. They ignore the gauze running up his wrists, holding him together.

And Stan tells them that God is a turtle.

...

They stay for one week before Richie and Eddie join them. And then they all stick around for another week after that, because why not make it an even month of disappearing off the face of the Earth? How can that pale façade of life mean anything when there's people you love this much? What are movies and fashion lines and terrible spouses and unimportant jobs in the face of Stan's smile and his dry wit, his love for exotic birds and fancy coffee.

They stay with him and his wife, basking in the sharp, almost cutting relief of finally being together. They meet Patricia, who is bewildered but kind and hospitable beyond belief; she holds herself back from questioning all of them when she sees Stan smile and laugh with them around, when her gaze lands on his wrapped wrists. One day, they might tell her the truth, might take back all their excuses and white lies. She is a wonderful, understanding woman, and one day they hope she will be an honorary Loser.

But for now, they learn about birds and Stan's students at the university where he teaches. They get drunk in his basement while watching all their favorite movies from the '80s. They order pizza and wings and demolish them like the children they never got to be, like they would have if they had gotten the chance to be together in their twenties and thirties. They sleep together in a giant puppy pile in the guest bedroom, Stan curled between them; though they are keeping him from his wife; though they are all forty, and it hurts all their joints to lay in a pile on the floor. They clutch at each other in the dark and revel in feeling hearts beating, warm and alive, from all sides.

("I was gone for a month because I was sleeping with a redhead, two blondes, and three brunettes. And all I remember about it how it fucked your back for the next four days. That's the worst part of being 40; you'd rather sleep alone on memory foam than fuck six super-hot people on the floor. And that's really how you know you're having your midlife crisis," Richie will one day say in his comedy special *Trashmouth Tozier: Welcome Home, Loser!* It's nominated for an Emmy. Bev is so proud to be his redhead; she's in the front row with Ben when Rich's tour brings him to Boston.)

They are all there the night Bev calls a divorce lawyer, offering their silent, steadfast support. Eddie holds her hand with a knowing look in his eyes when she arranges for a restraining order, as she sends photos of the marks Tom has left on her, gives names of friends who can corroborate the times she's stayed with them (She's blessedly thankful for Kay, thankful she's the one Loser who made a true friend outside of Derry. She introduces Kay to Patricia and Audra, and sometimes it's nice to get away from all of the men. She never liked being the only girl).

Bev has always been courageously practical in her own way, even if she could never leave him. It's complicated with the company; she is the artistic drive, but he handles so much of the business; it doesn't help that it looks like she just left all her responsibilities behind and came back with another man in tow. Keeping the abuse a secret was never an option; she can't bear to see him in the day-to-day of her job, staring at her during board meetings. She wants her designs and her clothes and her few meager possessions back; all the things she hopes he didn't destroy the second she left him. With the evidence submitted, there's not much left for her to do until she can go back and deal with the legality of dividing the company between them.

She never has to see him again. When that sinks in, she wraps her arms around Ben's neck and cries into his collarbone. She thinks of the girl, with dirty overalls and a cigarette in hand, who had stood up to her father at 13, who had defeated him and decided no one would ever hurt her like that again. And all the years wasted because that one moment of courage was forgotten, all the years she was never able to dredge it up again. Not until she found these people, until she found the family who loves her so unconditionally.

Marsh Studios debuts a year after they liquidate the original company. She gets contacted for the Oscars by five different actresses. All of them understand men like Tom all too well; and she understands why they don't tell anyone.

Bev will make clothes for all her friends, their public engagements and marriages and individual spotlights. She'll make clothes for red carpets and campaign events. She will spend her summers on a boat with the love of her life and her Christmases surrounded by friends who will never forget her again. Her days will be filled with

sunshine, without a bruise or shout in sight, and Ben will love her without hurting her.

But for now, they sit in Stan's backyard as he points out all the birds he can see. She feels properly warm, and the grass beneath her is soft and lush. Ben tells her he wants to buy a boat, so that they can sail around and chase the sun. She tells him she's always wanted a few dogs, big ones that love you and protect you. They are holding hands, hidden in the grass even though everyone already knows they're in love. There is something sweet and childish in the feigned secrecy. Patricia has made lemonade and there is laughter and relief and sunlight that reminds her of jumping into the quarry, all those years ago; when they were thirteen and she felt the wind against her cheeks, heard the delighted screaming of the other Losers following her, felt the loving sting of the water catching her down below. The light had shimmered across its surface, and it had been freedom and friendship.

Bev wants that boat. And those dogs.

She sees a turtle in the grass and points it out unthinkingly, hoping Stan will know the species. But when he sees it, tears pool in his eyes.

The turtle looks at them, wise and grave. And they know It is gone for good. There is peace and happiness, and they will never forget each other again. But it is time to go back to their own lives.